

MARCH 2015



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ST. VINCENT FERRER PARISH

LIVING CHURCH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

Eucharistic Ministers

Finding Honor and Privilege in Their Role

"If we but paused for a moment to consider attentively what takes place in this Sacrament, I am sure that the thought of Christ's love for us would transform the coldness of our hearts into a fire of love and gratitude." – St. Angela of Foligno

The idea of transforming the coldness of our human hearts into a fire of love is a powerful one. Perhaps that's why the Eucharistic Ministers at St. Vincent Ferrer treat their position with such reverence.

"It's a calling – it's an honor," says Eucharistic Minister Coordinator and Trainer Karen Schaefer of her role in helping distribute the Precious Body and Blood at Mass. "And it's a privilege to do it."

Eucharistic Ministers are responsible for helping the priest make sure each parishioner receives the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist at Mass. Not only does this special role help keep the Mass moving, but as Karen attests, it also puts a personal touch on the Communion process.

"We help serve the Precious Body and Blood at Mass," she says. "What we do helps the celebrant feel a little more in tune with the parishioners."

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Eucharistic Ministers help the Mass celebrant meet the needs of each parishioner. As Ministry Coordinator and Trainer Karen Schaefer explains, the role is an honor and privilege for Catholics to fulfill.



STEWARDSHIP

The Wise Men's Gifts Symbolize Our Lenten Obligations

We experience great joy when we celebrate the coming of the Magi at Epiphany each year. For many of us, it is the completion of Christmas. Yet, the gifts offered by the Magi — gold, frankincense and myrrh — can be a guide for us as we plan our Lenten observances this year.

It may seem strange to connect the joyful celebration of Epiphany with the penitential season of Lent. Yet, our spiritual life should not be divided into separate bits having no connection with each other. In the same way, the Church's liturgical year should also flow from one season to another. The different feasts and seasons certainly have different emphases, but they are intended to build on each other. So let's see if we can connect what the Magi gave Jesus with what we're going to offer Him this Lent.

The basic ingredients for our Lenten rule normally come from what are termed the Three Notable Duties — prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These in turn come from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

How do we connect the wise men's gifts with the notable duties? Actually, what the gifts symbolize matches up surprisingly well.

Frankincense is the basic ingredient in the incense used in the worship of God, in the ancient world and in the Church today. Offering it to Jesus points out His divine nature, and so it symbolizes prayer. Our Lenten rule needs to include prayer and worship. Of course, we are bound to worship at Sunday Mass year-round. Maybe during Lent, we might add a weekday Mass. Perhaps we can increase the time we devote to private prayer at home or at adoration. Devotional reading from the Bible or another appropriate book can be added. And don't forget the possibility of adding family devotions during Lent, so the whole family prays together.

When we offer our gold to Christ to build His Church and to help His poor, we are engaged in almsgiving. While

giving from the treasure God has entrusted to us is a duty throughout the whole year, maybe this Lent we can practice being a little more generous than usual. If our giving is a thankful response to the gift of eternal life that God has given us, we will find that the giving is indeed a means of grace.

For centuries, myrrh has been associated with fasting. Although myrrh comes from the same family of plants as frankincense, it has a more pungent scent and bitter taste. In the ancient world, it was regularly used in embalming. Generations of theological writers have seen the gift of myrrh as a foreshadowing of Christ's sufferings. And fasting strengthens us in holiness and prepares us to come into God's presence after our own deaths. St. Thomas Aquinas himself linked myrrh with repentance and fasting when he wrote that myrrh represents the penance by which we preserve our souls from the corruption of sin.

Fasting may be the most difficult of the three notable duties for modern Americans. After all, most of the advertising and many of the magazine articles we see are devoted to making us more, not less, comfortable. We usually think of fasting only under the heading of dieting to lose weight. Instead, try to think of fasting as a way to become more spiritually fit. Body and spirit affect each other. The whole sacramental system is built on the truth that we can receive spiritual grace through material things and physical actions. Our specific requirements of fasting are limited — abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent, and a reduction in the quantity of food we eat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. But discipline of our physical bodies for our spiritual well-being does not have to be limited to Lent!

Gold, frankincense and myrrh were indeed valuable gifts for the wise men to present to the Child Jesus. When we look at their symbolism, we can see their relationship to the three notable duties of almsgiving, prayer and fasting. What gifts are we going to offer to Jesus this Lent?



The Joy of Lent

Dear Parishioners,

Have you ever thought about the joy in sacrifice that Lent provides? Most of us don't delight in sacrifice; in fact, in our daily lives we often do our best to avoid challenges and practices that push us outside of our comfort zones.

In Christianity, there is a beautiful irony between joy and sacrifice, and we are presented with a wonderful opportunity to embrace this in a unique way during Lent. In his 2014 Lenten message, Pope Francis shared, "Lent is a fitting time for self-denial; we would do well to ask ourselves what we can give up in order to help and enrich others by our own poverty."

While giving up sweets in favor of healthy snacks for Lent is a common and noble endeavor, the goal of Lent should not only be a spiritual excuse to lose weight! In choosing acts of self-denial, we are saying "no" to things in order to get into the practice of saying "no" when inclined towards sin, ultimately deepening our faith and our relationship with the Lord. Victory can be found when we deny ourselves and pick up our crosses and hardships in order to



grow closer to Christ!

Therein lies the joy. When we grow closer to God by denying our will, we say "yes" to a life of abundance with Him. Our God is a benevolent God; He will not hold back His grace from those who honor Him and choose challenging things to grow and give Him glory. Christ even tells us Himself, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Without question, Lent is a time for conscious penitence and for spiritual preparation for Easter. And, it is important to remember that God loves us whether we make Lenten changes or not. At the same time, Lent provides us an opportunity to make God a greater part of our life, and to take our faith to new levels. Stewardship is a God-centered way of life — a spiritual way of living that, above all, acknowledges God's presence in all we do.

Lent is a time for each and every one of us to do more than simply deny ourselves; we need to welcome God into our lives in greater ways, so that when we get to Holy Week and Easter, we have an even greater appreciation for the sacrifice the Lord made for us. Talk about pure joy!

May you and your loved ones enjoy a holy and joyous Lenten journey, and a blessed Easter.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. George Kunkel



Baptism

Preparing Parents for Baptism

The St. Vincent Ferrer Baptism Preparation Program

For many of us, baptism may be viewed as a necessary step in the early life of our children. Yet, we might not often think about the true significance of this sacrament. As the first step of initiation into the Church for our child, it is so important for parents to attend classes prior to the baptism in order to prepare their hearts and minds for their child's first Sacrament of Initiation.

The Baptism Preparation program here at St. Vincent Ferrer provides parents with everything they need to prepare for the baptism of their child. Fr. George Kunkel coordinates the program, using the class time to teach parents about the Sacrament of Baptism, along with its history in the Church.

"We look at the Baptism Preparation class as an opportunity for evangelization and catechesis as we meet with these couples. We hope that they leave the class with a deeper understanding of their faith." – Fr. George Kunkel

"Basically, it's a presentation of the theology of the baptism, and we share the history of how the Church has come to baptism of infants," Fr. George says. "Jesus played with the children and converted the adults. That's how the early Church began – but then over time, the sacraments were separated for children. The theology of original sin developed and people decided we wanted our children baptized as infants."

The classes are offered quarterly on Sunday afternoons, and generally last for up to two hours. Parents are shown a video explaining what they should expect on the day of the baptism, and Fr. George emphasizes the importance of being prepared to bring your child up in the faith. He also explains the Church's requirements for godparents.

"Godparents need to be good role models – someone who will pass on their faith and be a good example," he says. "They will walk the journey of faith with the children, they will be there for the children, and share their faith with the children. It's more than just giving them a birthday and Christmas gift. It's actually walking that journey with them. One godparent must be a confirmed Catholic, and the other can be a baptized Christian. They are also asked to be male and female if there are two of them."



Amy and Todd Ford celebrated their son Alex's baptism this past July



Amy and Todd Ford — who were married at St. Vincent Ferrer, — baptized their son, Alex, here in July of this past year. Looking back on the Baptism Preparation process, Amy found the class to be informative and enjoyable.

"They went over what to expect, and made sure we were fully committed to understanding what it means to bring our son into the faith," Amy says. "They showed a really informative video that gave a good overview for what to expect on the day and gave reasoning for who we should choose for godparents. They even went over things

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like appropriate dress for your child on the day. I really liked the class and especially the video.”

Fr. George enjoys working with parents during such an exciting time in their family’s lives, and uses his time with them as a chance to deepen their faith.

“In today’s world, we are faced with different challenges when it comes to these parents,” Fr. George says. “I think sometimes, one parent might be more into practicing their faith than the other parent. They could both be baptized Catholic, but one practices more than the other. Each couple faces different issues. So we look at the Baptism Preparation class as an opportunity for evangelization and catechesis as we meet with these couples. We hope that they leave the class with a deeper understanding of their faith.”

For more information on the Baptism Preparation program here at St. Vincent Ferrer, please contact the parish office at 513-791-9030.



The Baptismal Font at St. Vincent Ferrer

Eucharistic Ministers *continued from front cover*

Becoming a Eucharistic Minister is a possibility for any Catholic who has received all of the sacraments up to Confirmation. As a coordinator at St. Vincent Ferrer for more than five years, Karen says one of her favorite things about her position is helping young parishioners become Eucharistic Ministers.

“The majority of our Eucharistic Ministers are adults, but one of the main reasons I became coordinator was to get young people involved,” Karen says. “I thoroughly enjoy seeing the younger generation get involved in ministry.”

According to Karen, the church usually sees about 10 eighth-graders from the school who express an interest in becoming a Eucharistic Minister. Once those students are confirmed, they can then distribute Holy Communion at the Wednesday school Mass.

“At the end of their eighth-grade year, I usually contact the teachers at school to see if any of the students want to move on to helping with Sunday Mass,” Karen explains. “A lot of them will continue because they can use it as service hours once they’re in high school.”

But, beyond earning service hours, Karen says she believes the older students who choose to serve at Sunday Masses are gaining something that will benefit them throughout their faith lives.

“It gets young people more involved in the actual Mass and gives them insight into it,” she says. “It’s something special.”

Karen welcomes calls from parishioners who are interested in starting the process to become a Eucharistic Minister. If you’re interested, please call her at 513-543-9162 or reach out to her via email at Karen@mismicro.com.



Financial Update as of January 31, 2015

Your November 2014 issue of the *Living Church* newsletter contained our 2013-14 Annual Financial Report for St. Vincent Ferrer Church. That report contained financial results through June 30, 2014. This issue of the *Living Church* gives parishioners a financial update through Jan. 31, 2015.

We are seven months into the fiscal year that will end on June 30, 2015. Income has been about \$16,000 better than expected, but expenses have also been \$11,700 higher than budgeted. We are paying down our parish debt with regular monthly payments. Our outstanding debt as of Jan. 31 is \$874,500. We anticipated that this fiscal year would end with a deficit, and that expectation has not changed.

As a result of our Fall Offertory Campaign, parish families pledged an additional \$78,700 that is not reflected in the Annual Budget in the Jan. 31 report. In addition, as of press time of this newsletter, I have started to solicit donations from St. Vincent Ferrer parishioners for the archdiocesan-wide capital campaign known as One Faith, One Hope, One Love. Parishioners have been generous, and SVF will receive 20 percent of all donated funds – plus 60 percent of all donations that exceed our goal. These additions to income will significantly reduce the expected deficit.

Fr. George



St. Vincent Ferrer Church Financial Report as of January 31, 2015

| | Yr. to Date Actual | Yr. to Date Budget | Annual Budget |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Income | | | |
| Sunday Collection | 491,715 | 505,000 | 788,500 |
| Christmas | 38,510 | 40,000 | 40,000 |
| Festival | 35,000 | 50,000 | 50,000 |
| School | 452,054 | 409,901 | 787,440 |
| All Other Income | 62,835 | 59,162 | 121,518 |
| Total Income | 1,080,114 | 1,064,063 | 1,787,458 |
| Expenses | | | |
| Salaries & Benefits | 766,191 | 770,248 | 1,299,449 |
| Plant & Utilities | 192,506 | 178,471 | 312,032 |
| Debt Payments | 66,606 | 66,606 | 114,181 |
| All Other Expenses | 120,539 | 118,830 | 202,740 |
| Total Expenses | 1,145,842 | 1,134,155 | 1,928,402 |
| Income Less Expenses | -65,728 | -70,092 | -140,944 |

Diana Jaeger | *The Gift of Faith*

As parents, teaching our children the Catholic faith is a legacy passed down through the generations. The Church has long recognized families as being the first heralds of our faith, for it is in the home that children first learn about love, forgiveness, charity, and prayerful worship. And for parishioner Diana Jaeger, building on the gift of faith given to her by her family has been the foundation for how she lives her life.

Born in 1948 at Good Samaritan Hospital right here in Cincinnati, Diana has strong ties to the area. As the oldest of four siblings – two brothers and one sister – Diana was raised in a household in which Catholic education was very important. She attended St. Dominic School, St. Anne Catholic School, and McAuley High School. Later, when she attended the University of Cincinnati to study Quantitative Analysis, she held on to her Catholic roots by joining the Newman Center on campus.

“When I was growing up, if you were Catholic you went to Catholic school,” Diana says. “It was rare to meet someone who was Catholic who didn’t attend Catholic school. Of course, I didn’t realize until later in life what a blessing my faith was and how it would sustain me.”

In addition to the catechism Diana was learning in school, she was also learning a quiet kind of faith – the kind that is deeply spiritual and unwavering – from her maternal grandmother.

“I was very close to my grandmother,” Diana says. “I traveled with her by train to places like Detroit, Mich. and Norfolk, Va. After my grandfather passed away, she remarried and moved to a farm not very far from here. I visited her often there, and I have special memories of sitting on her front porch after dinner and praying the Rosary together. I was very fortunate I had that time with her.”



There is no doubt that faith is a gift, but it’s one that is all too easy to take for granted. Diana says that during the time she moved to Chicago to work as a programmer and systems analyst for Sears, then later when she moved back home to get married, she held on to her Catholic beliefs. However, her faith was more of an afterthought and not something that was central in her life. But all that changed when, after almost 16 years of marriage, she found herself going through a divorce. It was not something she could have ever imagined happening to her, and it left her feeling vulnerable.

“The divorce showed me that my faith mattered to me much more than I realized,” Diana says. “There

was so much about my faith that I had taken for granted, but during that time when I was hurt – when I questioned why this was happening – I fell back on prayer, and it was prayer that got me through it.”

In looking back, Diana says that moment in her life, which admittedly was difficult, also contained so many graces – she re-discovered the faith of her childhood and experienced a spiritual renewal, she began taking care of herself physically by becoming a runner, and she had her son, Brad, to inspire her.

“He is the joy of my life,” Diana says. “He is an incredible son. He graduated with honors in mechanical engineering from Vanderbilt University, and he was part of the team that won the Automotive X PRIZE for designing a car that would complete 200 miles on two gallons of gas. You can see their car displayed in the Ford Museum, and Brad’s name is on the plaque.”

Today, Diana is retired and has a special bond with St. Anthony, saying that the older she gets, the more she calls on him for help in finding lost items. She has been a member of the parish for almost 27 years, with her involvement reflecting different stages in her life. When Brad was

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MASSES

SATURDAY VIGIL: 5:00 P.M.

SUNDAY: 9:00 A.M. AND 11:00 A.M.

CHAPEL (PARISH CENTER):

MON-FRI: 8:30 A.M.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:

SATURDAY: 3:30-4:30 P.M.

Diana Jaeger

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younger, she found ways to help with the PREP Program, but in recent years she has been very involved with the parish RCIA program – initially becoming involved when a friend asked Diana to be her sponsor. (In an interesting side note, her friend's son was sponsored by Diana's son, Brad.) And for someone who values her faith tremendously, Diana finds inspiration in witnessing and helping others on their own faith journey.

"I don't know what I would do without my faith," Diana says. "While I was blessed to be raised a Catholic, it wasn't until I chose to take my faith and make it my own – to acknowledge it and embrace it – that I fully appreciated its beauty and richness. It is truly a gift."

HOLY WEEK / EASTER SCHEDULE

HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 2

7:00 p.m. MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

8:30 p.m. Private Prayer in Church

(Sign up for half hour intervals)

10:00 p.m. Formal Night Prayer in Church

(Lasting 15 minutes)

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 3

12:00 noon LITURGY OF THE LORD'S PASSION AND DEATH

1:30 p.m. STATIONS OF THE CROSS (immediately following the Good Friday Liturgy)

HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 4

8:30 p.m. EASTER VIGIL MASS - Fulfills your Easter Sunday obligation.

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 5

9:00 a.m. MASS

10:30 a.m. MASS

12:00 noon MASS